



BELGIUM



INTRODUCTION

Belgium became independent from the Netherlands in 1830. The country prospered in the past half century as a modern, technologically advanced European state and member of NATO and the EU. The capital city of Brussels is home to numerous international organizations including the EU and NATO.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

King PHILIPPE

Head of Government

Prime Minister Alexander DE CROO

Government Type

federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy

Capital

Brussels

Legislature

bicameral Parliament consists of the Senate or Senaat (in Dutch), Senat (in French) (60 seats) and the Chamber of Representatives or Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers (in Dutch), Chambre des Représentants (in French) (150 seats)

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 30,528 sq km

Land: 30,278 sq km

Water: 250 sq km

Climate

temperate; mild winters, cool summers; rainy, humid, cloudy

Natural Resources

construction materials, silica sand, carbonates, arable land

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

high income economy with strong but moderate growth; high public debt; aging labor force; low labor force participation of low-skilled, migrant, and older workers; strong welfare system; high congestion; complex business permitting and judicial systems

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$557.1 billion (2020 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$48,200 (2020 est.)

Industries - engineering and metal products, motor vehicle assembly, transportation equipment, scientific instruments, processed food and beverages, chemicals, pharmaceuticals

Agricultural products - sugar beets, milk, potatoes, wheat, pork, lettuce, poultry, maize, barley, pears

Exports \$414.8 billion (2020 est.)

cars/vehicle parts, refined petroleum, packaged medicines, medical cultures/vaccines, diamonds, natural gas (2019)

partners: Germany 17%, France 14%, Netherlands 13%, UK 8%, US 6%, Italy 5% (2019)

Imports \$412.9 billion (2020 est.)

cars, refined petroleum, packaged medicines, medical cultures/vaccines, diamonds, natural gas (2019)

partners: Netherlands 16%, Germany 13%, France 10%, US 8%, Ireland 5%, China 5% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

11.8 million (July 2021 est.)

Population Growth

0.59% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity

Belgian 75.2%, Italian 4.1%, Moroccan 3.7%, French 2.4%, Turkish 2%, Dutch 2%, other 10.6% (2012 est.)

Language

Dutch (official) 60%, French (official) 40%, German (official) less than 1%

Religion

Roman Catholic 57.1%, Protestant 2.3%, other Christian, 2.8%, Muslim 6.8%, other 1.7%, atheist 9.1%, nonbeliever/agnostic 20.2% (2018 est.)

